



City of Tempe

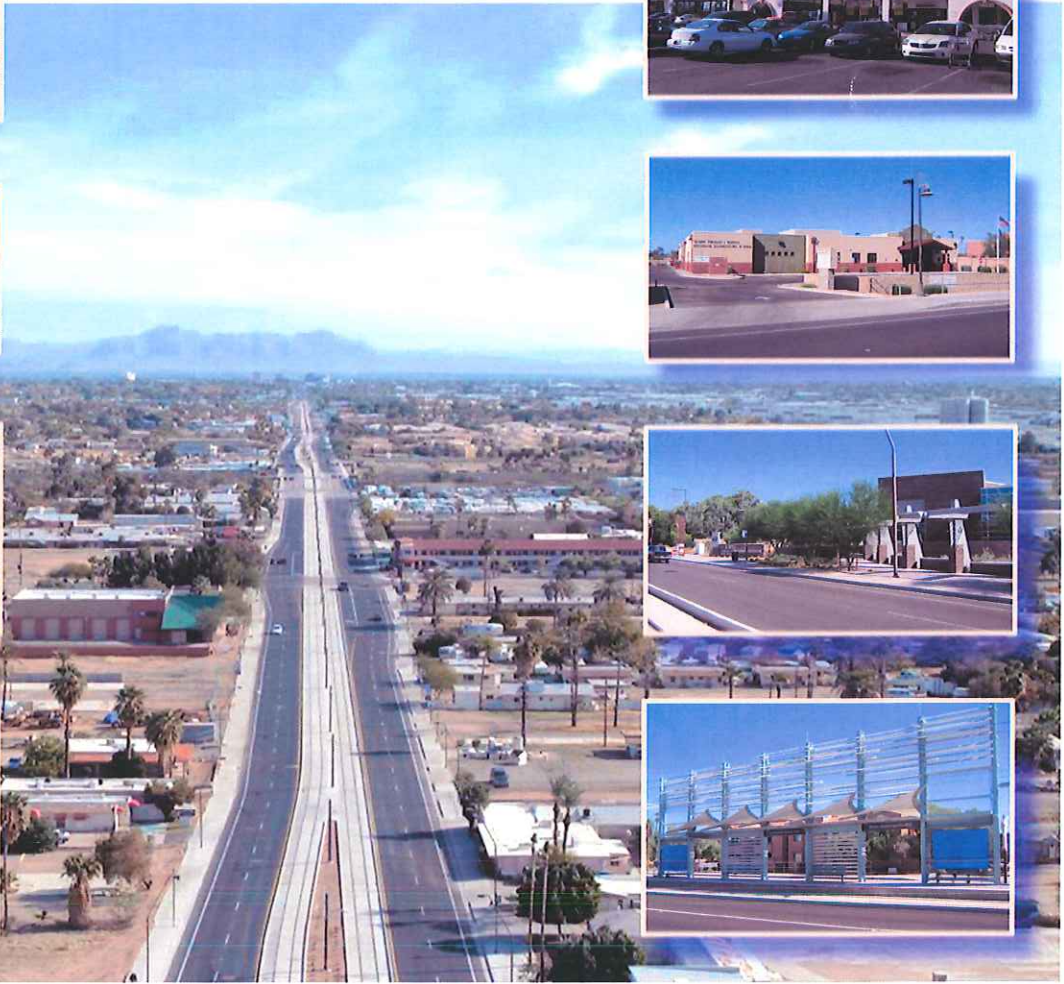


APAC

Apache Boulevard Project Area Committee

September 1996

December 2008



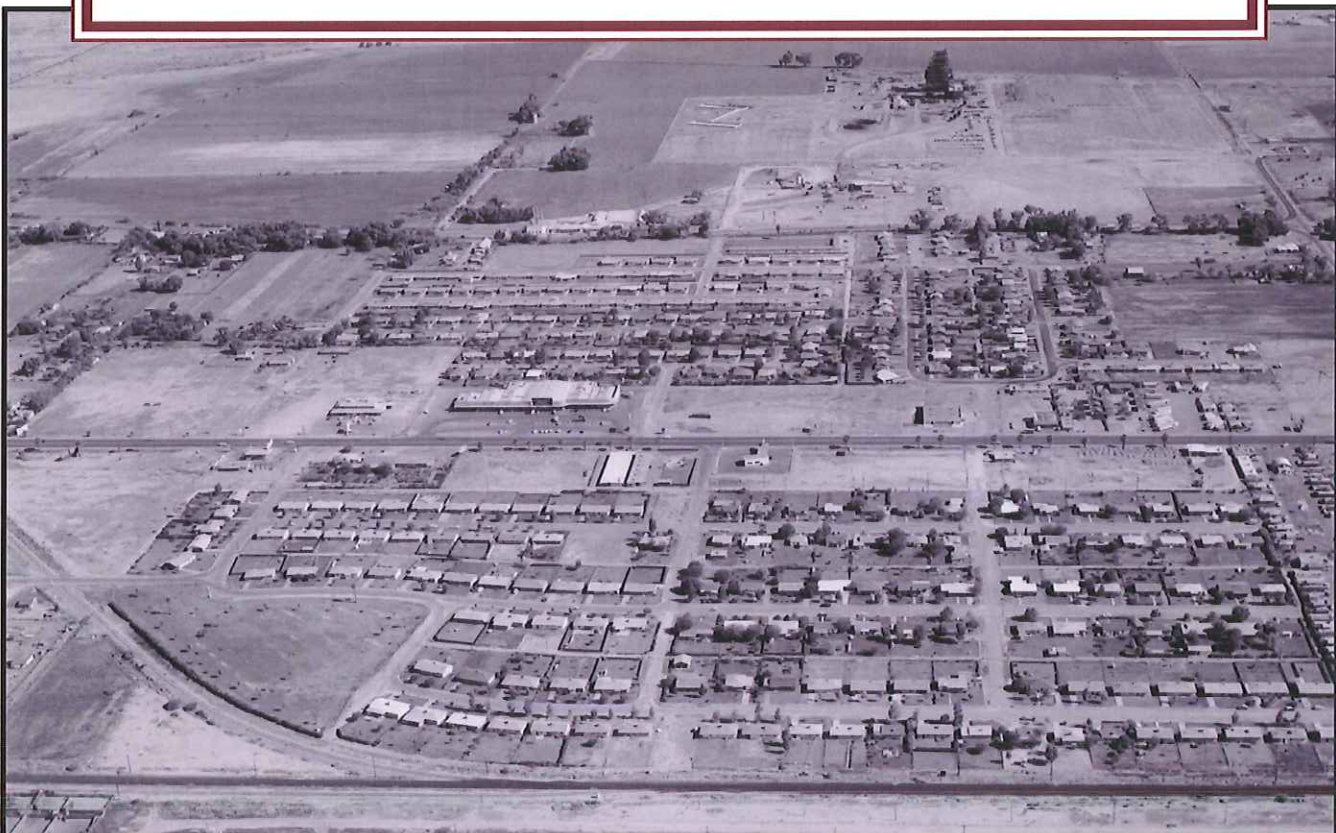
A Brief History of the Apache Boulevard Area

In the 1800's, before Arizona was a state, the road that was to become Apache Boulevard was used as a connection from Tucson to Phoenix. After statehood it was designated as State Route 89 and then U.S. Highway 60.

Over the decades, many of the typical "highway commercial" uses sprang up along Apache Boulevard. These included tourist attractions, motels, service stations, restaurants and recreational vehicle parks. In the years following World War II, a significant number of new motels and "tourist-oriented" businesses were established along the Boulevard. With the advent of the GI Bill affordable housing developments began appearing in the late 1940's along a narrow corridor following the highway just outside of the commercial corridor of the Boulevard.

This worked fine until the 1960's, when Interstate 10 created an alternate connection to Tucson bypassing the area. In the 1970's, the Superstition Freeway (now State Route 60) created an alternate link to the east valley and points beyond, further reducing the Boulevard's role as a transportation corridor.

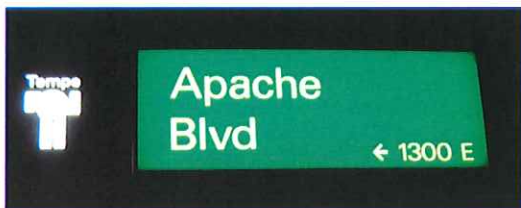
Apache Boulevard's role was changed by the new routes. Its concentration of highway commercial zoning was no longer economically viable. Many commercial buildings along the boulevard were over 50 years old. Lack of maintenance over the years and a pattern of disinvestment combined with underutilized or vacant land, contributed to undesirable conditions that businesses and residents suffered from in the nineties.



APAC
Apache Boulevard Project Area Committee
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In the beginning...

In 1996 several business owners and residents approached the City of Tempe seeking assistance to address the problems on Apache Boulevard.



In response, three focus group meetings were held in early 1996. Based on input from these groups and local business owners and residents, the Apache Boulevard Redevelopment Area was defined as a "study area" by the Tempe City Council on May 9, 1996 with the intent of creating a redevelopment area.

In the summer of 1996, a request was made for volunteers to serve on a Project Area Committee. As a result, 23 representatives that either lived or had a business connection on the boulevard were selected to serve on the Apache Boulevard Project Area Committee (APAC).

APAC began meeting in September 1996. This was a unique committee as, for the first time, the City brought together businesses and neighborhoods. In the past, committees were usually made up only of commercial or only of residential interests. Members of both groups had their own ideas about what they wanted to see the Boulevard become but in the end each realized they needed to work together to raise the area to a new level.

Kris Zahn, from Tempe Bowl, was voted the first Chair person of APAC. APAC meetings were first held at Tempe Bowl. It was her job to guide these diverse interests to come together. For the duration of 1996 APAC worked with City Planner Dave Fackler and other City staff through a "visioning" process to create a list of factors which were important for improving the area.

A Mission Statement was written and adopted by the committee in early 1997 (see next page).

At the same time survey work and mapping took place in late '96 and early '97. After the background information was compiled, a design charrette with staff and members was held on July 25, 1997 for the purpose of establishing design guidelines for the Boulevard. After 15 months of work the Redevelopment Plan was formally adopted by the Tempe City Council on December 11, 1997. In 1998 APAC moved its meetings to the new Escalante Community Center.

To read the full Apache Boulevard Master Plan go to: www.Tempe.gov/ApacheBlvd

APAC Mission Statement

Encourage reinvestment in the Apache Boulevard area in order to build a more desirable neighborhood in which people will enjoy living and working. Enhance the positive aspects of this area and promote desirable reuse of the land.

REGARDING APACHE BOULEVARD:

Upgrade commercial development by introducing viable long-term businesses and mixed-use projects, creating a sense of place with an aesthetically pleasing theme. Increase the residential and tourist-oriented development. Develop a strong business community with a Boulevard management district, intermodal transit system, trolley service and a safe, well-lighted environment. Increase the number of community facilities. Undergrounding utility lines in the area is also encouraged.

REGARDING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS:

Encourage a strong sense of community and an enhanced quality of life through an improved integration of the Boulevard and its services with the surrounding residential areas. Work toward an increased owner-occupied to rental ratio; consistently adequate lighting, streets and paths; enhanced participation in community associations; increased green spaces and parks; enhanced recreational opportunities; better access to schools and improved vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle flows through the neighborhood. Promote the rehabilitation of existing residential structures and eliminate rundown structures that cannot be rehabilitated.

Ten Years of Accomplishments

No job is too big if you break it down into smaller jobs. To get a handle on this roughly 3 mile stretch the committee broke the boulevard down into 3 zones: Zone 1 (Rural Road to McClintock Drive), Zone 2 (McClintock Drive to Price Road) and Zone 3 (Price Road to Tempe Canal) plus Special Development Area 2 (Eighth Street from Rural to the historic Creamery, east of Dorsey). This area was incorporated into APAC because in 1991, the City had purchased the National Register-listed Elias-Rodriguez House on Eighth Street. The City Council committed to completely restoring the Elias-Rodriguez House and site as a commemoration of the contributions of Tempe's Mexican American pioneers and as a catalyst for the thematic redevelopment of the area.

Some of the first work of APAC was working to remove specific properties and businesses that were causing the majority of the problems on the Boulevard. When APAC was created it received funding from the City in the form of CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) Grants. From 1998 to 2000 there was a lot of taking away.

At the same time Dave Fackler handed over the reigns to city planner Steve Nielson to guide the APAC committee.

I'm most proud of Apache Boulevard, light rail will ultimately get the credit for this area's renaissance, but it was the many years of hard work and commitment by staff from Neighborhood Enhancement, the Police, Development Services, Fire and the Redevelopment Committee (APAC) that cleaned up Apache and gave it a fighting chance.

-Neil Calfee, Senior Planner

One of the first major accomplishments was taking out the "Bermuda Triangle" of bars: the El Rey, Hatties Tavern and the Lime Lite between McClintock and Smith Rd. Once these were removed, the crime rate dropped 45 percent.

The Tempe police were always very involved in supporting APAC. They attended meetings, gave updates on hot spots and reported on undercover operations. APAC was, in turn, their eyes and ears, giving them tips on criminal activity.

Small sub-committees were created to delve into specific issues. One looked at better access from neighborhoods to the Boulevard with bike and pedestrian paths, street

realignment and pedestrian crossings since the neighborhoods had the highest percentage of residents without cars in the city. Another looked at putting into place a landscaping theme to make the Boulevard more unique. These sub-committee reports were submitted and used to help "official planners".

Tempe's Code Enforcement section also provided some major tools that helped APAC change the area. At one point neighbors went street by street and gave staff lists of properties that appeared to be not up to code. These lists sped up the process so that APAC and city staff could hone in on the real problem areas.

In between working on solving problems APAC participated in many studies. Over the years these included The Tempe Neighborhoods Tomorrow Task Force (2000), Transit Oriented Design Study (2001) and the Light Rail Corridor Market Study, Housing Market Analysis and Neighborhood Marketing Plan (2002).

2000

After two years of mentoring from his predecessor Steve Nielson, Neil Calfee becomes the city planner responsible for working with APAC.

One of the first businesses that followed the APAC redevelopment plan was Five Star Transmission. They built a beautiful building that is still successful today.

New student apartments were started just west of Watson's flowers.

APAC soon recognized that improved pedestrian level street lighting was needed along the boulevard to help scare away the criminal element that seemed to be always lurking in the shadows.

All the work wasn't glamorous or visual. In the beginning non-APAC approved businesses were still being allowed to come in because the zoning permitted it. APAC alone did not have the legal right to stop non-conforming plans. To get the right businesses APAC worked with city staff to create new Mixed Use zoning to work with the upcoming light rail line. APAC also worked on both the city's 2020 General Zoning Plan and the updated 2030 General Zoning Plan.

Sometimes it seemed like things weren't progressing fast enough. Some members got discouraged and left. Some wishes were not taken seriously by those in authority, but there was always a core group that believed in the mission. Historic businesses like Watson's Flowers from 1927 and Toliver's Carpet One from 1943 were always there with their valuable historical perspective and belief in the betterment of the Boulevard.

2001

The Boulevard didn't have a supermarket. Basha's took a chance and opened a Food City at the site of an old Bayless supermarket. It was highly successful.

Despite a few warts, I feel that APAC had done a great service for "the Boulevard", its residents and businesses, and the city as a whole. It accomplished its mission of providing a framework for future development of the area consistent with the desires of the stakeholders involved. Redevelopment of the boulevard is well on its way and the future is looking good.

-Pen E. Johnson, Business Member

The Pappas school for the homeless comes to Tempe and was welcomed with open arms.

The city invested in 2 parks; Creamery Park on Eighth Street and Alegre Park in the Don Carlos neighborhood east of McClintock. This park coincided with the building of Hayden Cove Townhomes in the neighborhood. It was a big improvement over what was there and an early investment in an area with a lot of promise.

APAC fought for and convinced Valley Metro that the Boulevard needed at-grade paved light rail line along Apache and not ballasted tracks. APAC also helped

convince them that looking into the future, having a station at Smith/Martin would benefit the growing community around that area.

The U.S. Postal Service built a new sub-station at Smith/Martin.

Phil Amorosi became Chair of APAC.

2002

The idea of a neighborhood circulator bus emerges. APAC embraces the idea of a Neighborhood Flash knowing the neighborhoods have the densest population in the state and the most need for public transportation. The first circulator bus, from the Escalante Center in Victory Acres to Jaycee Park on the west side, was an instant hit.

One disappointment came when ASU announced at the last minute that they didn't want the light rail to go down McAllister and the route had to change to Terrace. It is a shame because now ASU is building many dorms along McAllister. The residents will still use light rail, but it would have been more convenient on McAllister.

The city invested in a beautiful Fire Station at Gary Street on the Boulevard.

The Southwest Center for the Healing Arts opened at the old Tempe Bowl site.

The run down Apache Motel met its demise.

2003

The city informed APAC that in order to get the police station going, APAC's funding would have to be poured into that project.

ASU shares with APAC its Master Plan for the Tempe Campus.

APAC, was a Herculean task at best, working to improve Apache Boulevard for the health, welfare and benefit of the citizens of Tempe.

*-Barb Worthington,
Neighborhood Chair*

The Newtown Community Land Trust built 2 homes in the Jen Tilly neighborhood.

Habitat for Humanity built 2 homes in the Victory Acres neighborhood.

The city received grants to upgrade the path along the SRP canal. APAC had supported the application in order to create another pedestrian access route that will help bring the area together.

Apache Blvd was finally recognized by ADOT with new signage on the 101 Freeway to signal when to exit. It took years, and many letters, to make this simple change happen. It seemed like such a simple request at the time.

APAC succeeded in efforts to have the railroad clean up its area along the Boulevard.

Chicanos Por La Causa partnered with the city to complete the historic preservation of the Elias/Rodriguez House on 8th St.

APAC pressured the "Knights of Pythias" non-profit organization national headquarters in Washington, DC to tear down the apartments along Apache that were being used for criminal activity. When shown the condition and the newspaper articles that were written they not only responded by tearing them down, they flew to Tempe to witness it and to personally apologize to the city for their local members' behavior.

Lucas Cabrerra of the Victory Acres neighborhood created a beautiful book documenting the history of this hispanic neighborhood.

The New School for the Arts opened its doors at the old Electric Ballroom site.

The Transportation Overlay District (TOD) was approved by the city council and re-enforced the APAC plan. This District lays the groundwork for the type of development that people will see in the future.

2004

Maricopa County got involved and Tempe partnered with them to create a Slumlord Task Force. This gave APAC the muscle to take care of problem properties like the Tradewinds trailer park, Alex's and the Saddle Horn motels that were just too much for Tempe's code enforcement to handle.

APAC has set a constructive example of the business community and the neighborhood associations working together with civility for the betterment of all involved.

We feel that what is happening on Apache Boulevard is just the beginning of the rebirth and renewal of the area.

*-Esther and Irving Kozinets,
Business Members*

Planning started for a new police sub-station on Apache.

The owner of the EZ Inn on the north side of Apache near McClintock, which was a constant problem for the police, decided to throw in the towel and sold the motel. The new owners fixed all the problems, changed the name, and they are now good community members on Apache.

Larry Schmalz became the city planner responsible for APAC.

2005

Valley Metro became a regular presenter at APAC meetings during construction of the light rail system. This was a blessing that members can't praise enough. The give and take helped make the huge construction process a lot easier to take.

APAC rejects a Day Resource Center being built on Apache.

Utility re-alignment and replacement began to take place to make way for light rail.

2006

Heidi Graham becomes the city planner responsible for APAC.

APAC won an appeal to stop the U-Haul company from putting in storage units across from a light rail station and regional Park and Ride lot.

Newberry Terrace development began to build single family homes in the Jen Tilly Neighborhood.

2007

Esquar Park in the Victory Acres neighborhood broke ground.

Holiday Inn at Rural and Apache became the Sheraton Four Points Hotel after extensive remodeling.

Light Rail Station Area Planning is completed.

2008

In the beginning, we were self-centered; we didn't understand the process of carefully planting seeds. We also didn't appreciate what a long-term project we had embarked upon, nor did we realize APAC's "successes" would come as we learned to be less indignant and more collaborative.

Over the years, I have come to treasure the gifts, vision, and most of all the commitment of my fellow APAC members. Together, we have learned enough to make meaningful contributions in public processes.

*-Gretchen Reinhardt,
Neighborhood Chair*

Hudson Park received a complete makeover.

Campus Edge student housing broke ground at 922 E. Apache.

The Retreat student housing broke ground at 1000 E. Apache.

Campus Suites student housing broke ground at 1800 E. Apache.

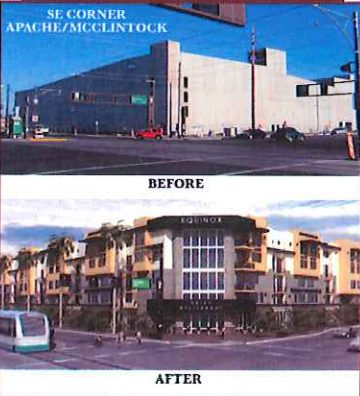
In-coming commuters from the east will be greeted by the Apache Trails development specifically created for the deaf community right along the canal.

Grey Development begins a 6 story mixed use project on the southeast corner of Apache and McClintock that will envelope the Park and Ride lot.

APAC approves plans for Tempe's first LEED certified "green" hotel to be built on the Boulevard just east of Rural Rd.

APAC approves plans for a Holiday Inn Express hotel to be built at the Dorsey light rail station.

Light Rail opens at the end of December.



In Conclusion

APAC's history shows what a small but dedicated combination of individuals who live, work and play along the Boulevard can accomplish. We knew the perception was worse than the reality. We had the vision.

Like Mill Avenue in the 70's, the Boulevard had turned into a scary place for most folks. The place to be avoided. It was always mentioned in the same breath as Van Buren in Phoenix. APAC members and city staff knew better. By bringing neighborhoods and businesses together, sharing problems and finding solutions it slowly turned around.

APAC's main goal was to transform the old auto business related uses that were remnants of the old highway into new pedestrian friendly uses. The city helped this vision along by investing over \$20 million, and that doesn't include light rail. After 10 years we see the fruits of many years of labor coming together.

Some work still needs to be done. Along Apache Boulevard itself, there are many vacant parcels that could be combined with adjacent property to create more desirable parcels of land. Many of these parcels currently are very long and narrow with limited frontage on the Boulevard.

ADA accessible curbs are still needed in all the neighborhoods. APAC believes that it would be best to bury all the utility lines in the neighborhoods. The area could also use more affordable housing options, such as converting the older motels into small affordable single room occupancy units, like studio apartments. In due time these issues will be resolved too.

Apache Boulevard is now a vibrant place with a bright future ahead of it. People are no longer afraid to walk down the street or through the neighborhoods. The area now includes award winning restaurants. Designated historic neighborhoods with large irrigated lots live comfortably next to new mixed use higher density condo's and apartments. The new Metro light rail line will add another new positive element to this mix.

For over 10 years there were caring, focused businesses and neighbors who accomplished a lot. APAC laid the ground work for the future and they are proud that they helped make Apache Boulevard a better place to be in Tempe.

